



# The NUNES Report

**\*Nunes helps obtain contract for jail\***

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## Quick Facts

In May, Rep. Nunes helped 33 constituents overcome problems with government agencies. For the year, the Congressman has directly solved cases for 167 constituents and is currently assisting 408 others.

## Congressman launches annual ag tour

Rep. Devin Nunes kicked off his first annual Central Valley Ag Tour May 27-28, touring agricultural and processing sites in Fresno and Tulare counties.

More than 40 community leaders participated in the day-and-a-half tour, snapping photos and sampling treats along the way. The event was aimed at giving people without an agricultural background a behind-the-scenes look at the industry, its challenges and successes.

"I think it's important that business leaders, government and city officials get an up-close-and-personal look at the agriculture industry, which drives our local economy," Mr. Nunes said. "Our farmers and processors are

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Above: Fresno City Councilman Jerry Duncan and Rep. Nunes inspect adult crickets ready to be packed and shipped from Bassett's Cricket Ranch near Visalia.

Below: Part of the ag tour group poses for a photo with Rep. Nunes during lunch on the second day of the Central Valley Ag Tour. See story for full list of tour stops.



## Jail gets federal contract with Nunes' help

The U.S. Marshals Service has agreed to house federal prisoners in the Tulare County Pretrial Facility in a deal worth as much as \$1.5 million a year to the county, Rep. Devin Nunes announced.



The congressman worked with Sheriff Bill Wittman for about a year to find a federal contract for the jail facility. The Marshals Service recently agreed to use the facility, paying \$52.04 per prisoner per night with an expected minimum population of about 60 prisoners but up to 100. The role of the Marshals Service is to transport federal prisoners, among other duties. The Federal Bureau of Prisons may also house prisoners

under this agreement.

The state-of-the-art jail, which features a courtroom and nearby airstrip, has been dormant for some time because the county lacked the funds to keep it open. The federal contract will help the facility reopen.

"I am pleased our hard work over the past year has paid off in a way that will help Tulare County use this great facility," Mr. Nunes said. "I think this is an example of how local and federal government agencies can come together in an arrangement that benefits both sides without an extra burden on the taxpayer."

Sheriff Bill Wittman said he was pleased they found a creative solution to the va-

cant jail facility.

"I applaud Congressman Nunes for his hard work in obtaining an agreement to house federal prisoners in Tulare County," Sheriff Wittman said. "I look forward to the day when we will reopen the Pre-Trial Facility, thereby providing better law enforcement for our citizens."

The agreement was approved by the Marshals Service, and by a unanimous vote by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

"We greatly appreciate the efforts of Congressman Nunes to reach agreement on a rate to house federal prisoners," Board Chairman Bill Sanders said. "With his help, we have taken an important first step toward reopening the Pre-Trial facility."

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innovative, hard working and concerned about the quality of life here in the Central Valley."

The ag tour group traveled with the congressman by charter bus throughout the 21st Congressional District. The congressional district has the highest agricultural output of any in the United States.

Day one the group toured:

Western Milling, Goshen  
Sun-Maid Raisins, Kingsburg  
Wawona Frozen Foods, Clovis  
Cobb Ranch, Fresno  
Friant Dam, Fresno  
Sweet Home Ranch, Dinuba  
Haagen-Dazs, Tulare

Day two the group toured:

Naturally Nuts, Visalia  
Bassett's Cricket Ranch, Visalia  
Golden Maid Ranches and [Fruit] Packing, Strathmore  
Kasbergen Dairy, Tulare

## Nunes sponsors natural gas legislation

With natural gas consumption expected to rise about 38% in the next two decades, Rep. Devin Nunes moved to secure ample supplies to meet the demand and keep prices down.

Mr. Nunes joined with fellow colleagues to introduce a bill that will help streamline the development of terminals for the shipment of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Liquefied natural gas is natural gas chilled to -260 degrees Fahrenheit, allowing for easier transportation from large-producing fields.

"We're seeing more consumption of natural gas in home heating, industrial use and power generation to meet tougher environmental and safety standards. Natural gas is a clean burning fuel that will continue to im-

prove air quality here in the Central Valley and throughout the state," Nunes said. "This bill ensures an adequate supply of this clean fuel for our future."

Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, producing about 50% less carbon dioxide than coal and 33% less than oil. More abundant supplies of natural gas will also help America build a more diverse energy portfolio because it is used to produce hydrogen for fuel cells and to power alternative-fuel vehicles.

Specifically, the bill would make the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) the lead agency concerning the siting, construction, expansion and operation of LNG import terminals.

The agency is currently



working on about 30 projects around the nation, including one at the Port of Long Beach. As lead agency, FERC can better ensure that LNG facilities meet critical safety standards and ensure terminals are developed in a timely manner.

## Legislative work encompasses many issues

### Agriculture

#### Crop Insurance

Congressman Nunes opposes a proposed reduction of \$41 million dollars in crop insurance and contacted Secretary Anne Veneman of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to express his concerns.

Currently, there are only 14 Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA) holders operating in the continental US. However, only two of the SRA holders deliver crop insurance in all states. Crop insurance is the USDA's principal means of helping farmers survive a crop loss. The program provides American farmers with more than \$41 billion in risk protection on approximately 220 million acres through about 1.2 million policies. The participation rate for major program crops was approximately 82 percent. Without crop insurance, many farmers would have difficulty obtaining operating loans to plant a crop. Crop insurance has become an integral thread of the financial safety net for rural America. Recently, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) proposed to reduce funding for private companies that deliver crop insurance by \$41 million. This will compound existing problems, which has resulted in significant and disconcerting industry consolidation over the past five years. Under the terms of the current SRA, the crop insurance industry has lost five companies since 2002:

The largest writer of crop insurance became insolvent, two other companies merged and two major reinsurance companies pulled out of the crop insurance market.

#### Family Farms

The Farm Service Agency recently proposed several federal rule changes to streamline regulations under the guaranteed loan program. As part of the new proposed rules, FSA included a definition of "family farm" that excludes producers with more than \$750,000 in gross income. This would end many farmers eligibility for direct or guaranteed loan programs. Farm Services Agency also proposed to clamp down on family members currently involved in a farming operation by limiting the definition of a "family farm operation" to one consisting of husband, wife, parent, child, brother or sister relationships. These changes would negatively impact many family farms in the San Joaquin Valley, undermining access to capital and ending longstanding FSA relationships with hard working farmers. Congressman Nunes opposes the rule changes and communicated his opposition to USDA.

#### Stone Fruit Trade with Mexico

Mexico is a market of increasing interest to California producers of stone fruits – including peaches, nectarines, plums and apricots. However, Mexico has continually increased the

scope and degree of its phytosanitary restrictions on California's exports to the point where they effectively constitute non-tariff trade barriers.

Earlier this year the industry was finally unwilling to accept the numerous unjustified conditions for a non-fumigation systems approach, and discussions for the 2004 season concluded without an agreement. As a result, all exported stone fruit in 2004 must be fumigated with methyl bromide, a process that significantly reduces the product's market value and shelf-life, particularly for apricots. Recognizing the importance of addressing this matter prior to the 2005 harvest, Congressman Nunes joined other Representatives from California urging swift, decisive action by the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Trade Representative. Specifically, Mr. Nunes called for the Administration's assistance in developing trade rules that embody a reasonable, scientifically justified approach. In order to achieve such a result, a strong message must be delivered to the Mexican government, including an insistence that sound scientific principles, credible evidence, and other international commitments be the basis for Mexican phytosanitary measures.

### Business

Congressman Nunes signed onto a letter supporting the Women's Business

### Quick Facts

In May, at the request of constituents, Rep. Nunes flew 11 American flags over the U.S. Capitol



## Legislative—cont'd. from page 3

Partnerships' (WBP) application for federal funding, \$150,000 a year for five years, through the United States Small Business Administration's Office. The WBP provides training, technical assistance, loans and support to unemployed individuals. They conducted their programs in Fresno, Tulare, Kings, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Monterrey, and San Luis Obispo counties.

### Education

Congressman Nunes became an original co-sponsor of H.R. 4410, the "Teacher Shortage Response Act." This bill is very similar to H.R. 438, which he co-sponsored earlier this year. This bill would provide additional student loan forgiveness for instructors who teach in the field of math, science, and special education. Currently the amount of loan forgiveness is set at \$5,000 and this bill would raise it to \$17,500.

### Government Reform

As part of his goal to streamline government and make it more accessible to every American, Rep. Nunes co-sponsored the Inspector General Online Reporting Act. Inspectors General perform vital audits to ensure that government programs are not wasting taxpayer money. These audits and reports serve as a guide to federal agencies in an effort to correct wasteful, abusive and fraudulent use of tax dollars. Since taxpayers are responsible for funding these programs, they should have access to the reports

online. This legislation would require the Inspectors General to publish all semi-annual reports and audits online.

### Judicial

Congressman Nunes signed a second letter of support for the authorization of four permanent judgeships for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, which covers Fresno and Tulare counties. The Eastern District's caseload is heavy and continues to rise. In fact, as of March 2004, the weighted caseload per judge has increased to 788, which is 55 percent greater than



the United States Judicial Conference's standard of 430 that is used to determine when a permanent judgeship should be added.

### Trade

The Port of Oakland serves as the primary outlet for agricultural trade for farmers in the San Joaquin Valley. It is an essential launching point for shipments of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as other important agriculture commodities, to Pacific Rim countries. Congress has authorized dredging at the port to deepen channels for growing traffic and larger vessels but must provide annual funding to complete

the work. Congressman Nunes communicated his support for funding to members of the Appropriations Committee and expressed his desire to see full funding of the Port's needs for 2005.

### Transportation

In California, small communities face a range of fundamental economic challenges in both obtaining and retaining the commercial air service they desire. In the past, these communities have tried individually to attract various airlines to begin air service at their respective airports. This year, Coalition of California Airports is trying an innovative and cost conscious approach by combining its resources to enable one airline to offer consistent, reliable and reasonably priced intra-state air service at its members' airports.

A grant from the Department of Transportation to the Coalition of California Airports will help many small communities from Northern to Southern California solve their air service deficiencies and produce a badly needed economic boost for many rural and suburban cities throughout the state. To this end, Congressman Nunes sent a letter to Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, requesting his approval of federal funding requested by the Coalition of California Airports.

### Quick Facts

In May, Rep. Nunes wrote to 1,152 constituents in response to their inquiries. Year to date, Rep. Nunes has responded to 5,773 constituents via the U.S. Mail.

Furthermore, since Rep. Nunes was elected to Congress he has responded to 17,585 constituent letters via the U.S. Mail.